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To say that "it has been strangely overlooked that thorns are natural awls and needles, and that hardwood knots preceded the stone-headed war-clubs, that pointed sticks were the first fish-spears, and that arrows made entirely of wood were and still are used by some Indians of this land" suggests an oversight on the author's part, for what he says has been "strangely overlooked" is rather, one should say, an accepted theory, and has been referred to by many writers, both here and abroad. Although the Eskimo arrow-flaker "preceded the stone which formed it into shape," it should always be remembered that a flaking tool of stone, acting by free-hand percussion, probably long preceded the bone flaker, which is usually an implement of two or more parts, as, for example, its point and handle, as against the plain spheroidal stone hammer of a more primitive period, although it cannot be denied that the so-called "baton of command" of the earliest French caves, whatever its real purpose, would have made a most excellent chipper, being almost always made of deer horn.

In his preface to the bulletin Mr Beauchamp refers to the interpretation of symbols on wampum belts and apparently adds another, to use his own expression, to "the doubtful opinions which have been founded on them." To say that one has satisfactorily read a belt would give the impression that the ideograph on the belt was constant, whereas a belt used on one occasion for a given purpose would the following day possibly be employed in an entirely different manner and for another purpose. The speech conveyed by a belt was learned, there is little doubt, after the belt was made, but a different speech or purpose, such for example as that it should answer as a gauge, or for a debt, would on another occasion be employed with the same belt.

Mr Beauchamp correctly attributes most of these bone and horn implements to a period not more than two or three hundred years ago, and explains the absence of bones to the gnawing of small animals, though many of the forms illustrated are much like objects found in the oldest layers of European caves associated with extinct fauna.

JOSEPH D. MCGUIRE.

*The Hieroglyphic Stairway. Ruins of Copan. Report on Explorations by the Museum.* By GEORGE BYRON GORDON. (Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. I, No. 6.) Cambridge : Published by the Museum, 1902. 38 pp., 18 pl., 4°.

One of the great pyramidal structures of the ruins of Copan, Honduras, is adorned with a so-called "hieroglyphic stairway," evidently

erected by the ancient Maya rulers to facilitate the ascent of that monumental pile. Since Palacio gave the earliest account of these ruins in 1570, scientific interest has always centered upon this locality. The gradual disintegration of the sustaining structure has recently caused the upper part of this impressive stairway to slide down over the lower portion, thus causing the sequence of the greater part of the inscription to become lost. Mr George Byron Gordon, already well known by his archeologic work in the same region, has been entrusted by the Peabody Museum to reëstablish the continuity of the inscriptions by a thorough study of their glyphs or symbols. Molds of all the glyphs have been made during previous expeditions and space has been provided in the Museum to install the casts as soon as their sequence has been definitively traced. Mr Gordon has already substantiated the evidence that the stairway inscription is over seven hundred years older than any other inscription of Copan, the initial date of which has hitherto been determined.

Another important fact established by the removal of the debris is that the central portion of the stairway was once embellished by the colossal figure of a seated, open-mouthed monster, flanked by human figures. At the base of the steps, just below the monster, is what Mr Gordon terms the altar, a high structure with rounded sides and built into the stairway, forming several partitions. The glyphs forming the faces of the steps are of excellent workmanship. When excavations were first begun in 1891 all these stone structures were covered entirely with a dense forest, and the unexplored part of the ruins is still in that condition.

An excellent idea of the extent and character of the ruins is given by the eighteen splendid photographic plates contained in the memoir. If the date of the monument can eventually be fixed, it will be determined by means of the glyphs still in position or scattered around the stairway, though these are now in a less satisfactory condition than any of the long inscriptions of Quirigua, Palenque, and Piedras Negras. There is reason to hope that the mystery surrounding this vast ruin in the valley of Copan will soon be revealed by the excellent work that is now being conducted.

A. S. GATSCHE.

*Indian Basketry. With 360 Illustrations. Second Edition. Revised and Enlarged.* By GEORGE WHARTON JAMES, Pasadena, Cal.: Printed Privately for the Author, 1902. 274 pp., ills., 8°.

The immediate call for a second edition of Mr James' book shows the widespread and increasing interest in aboriginal basketry. It seems